



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Below is a letter to the Majority and Minority leaders, regarding the formation of a bipartisan working group on trade with Cuba. Today ten Senators announced they would be participating.

Dear Senators Frist and Daschle:

We are writing to inform you of our intention to launch the Senate Working Group on Cuba. The Working Group will examine U.S. policies toward Cuba, including current trade and travel restrictions.

The sanction policy of the United States has been ineffective since it was adopted in 1962. Other nation's trade with Cuba and their producers benefit from that trade. The U.S. policy places our farmers, workers, and companies at an international competitive disadvantage. By some estimates, the United States loses out on an export market of nearly \$1 billion per year.

Current U.S. policy also hinders our ability to interact with the Cuban people by restricting American citizens' right to travel to Cuba. We believe that the American people can have greater influence on Cuban society by developing a relationship with the Cuban people. That is the only way to influence the peaceful transition to democracy and a market-oriented economy.

We are pleased with the formation of this group and look forward to working with you on matters related to Cuba.

Sincerely,

Max Baucus
Byron Dorgan
Maria Cantwell
Blanche Lincoln
Jeff Bingaman

Michael Enzi
Chuck Hagel
Norm Coleman
Jim Talent
Pat Roberts